



Gender Policy

1. Introduction

Croquet England passionately believes that croquet should be available to everyone. All who play, and all who aspire to play, should have the opportunity to reach their potential in our sport.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are fundamental principles which are at the heart of what we do and principles we strive to achieve, promote and uphold throughout the game of Croquet. It is a sport which prides itself on being one of the few where men and women can generally play on an equal footing, and the overwhelming majority of croquet tournaments, competitions, leagues and other events are open to everyone, regardless of sex or gender.

At the same time, Croquet England must also ensure that fair and level competition is achieved as far as possible, within the context of competitive events.

This policy has been drafted and approved following review of the following key inputs:

- The release of the World Croquet Federation (WCF) Gender Policy v2 on 4th August 2025. During the preparation for this policy the WCF produced a paper which established that croquet is a gender affected sport.
- The UK Supreme Court's April 2025 ruling that held that under the Equality Act 2010, the terms "*woman*" and "*sex*" mean *biological* woman and *biological* sex.
- Further input from the croquet playing community via a survey.

This policy aims to balance the principles of fairness and gender inclusion in a way that is reasonable and proportionate for the sport of croquet in England. We have attempted to reach an informed view, taking account of the medical evidence currently available and the emerging guidance.

However, it is recognised that there are limitations to the information available. Not only is it acknowledged that scientific evidence regarding transgender and gender diverse participation in sport is continually developing, but the recent Supreme Court ruling has changed the interpretation of the law and associated guidance. In particular, further guidance from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is awaited and will no doubt influence the thinking for croquet and all sports over the coming months.

Croquet England is therefore committed to keeping this policy, and its impact, under review. It is envisaged that the next review of this policy will be over the winter of 2026/2027, by which time it is expected that the government and the EHRC will have published further guidance.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all domestic tournaments and other events organised by and under the jurisdiction of Croquet England, including events organised by clubs Affiliated to Croquet England publicised in Croquet England's Fixtures Calendar.

It does not apply to events under the jurisdiction of the WCF, to which the WCF's own policy applies. Nor does it apply to events or awards organised by clubs or federations Affiliated to Croquet England which are not publicised in Croquet England's Fixtures Calendar. Croquet England strongly recommends that clubs and federations clearly communicate their criteria to all participants at the point of entry.

It applies to croquet players who wish to compete in a gender that is different to their sex assigned at birth.

It is recognised that there is a group of rare chromosomal/genetic conditions, referred to as differences in sex development (DSD) conditions. It is not possible to set out a policy for croquet players with those conditions, and any croquet player with such a condition can contact the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or someone appointed by them who has sufficient seniority and knowledge of the issue to manage it appropriately to confidentially discuss their circumstances.

3. Policy

Croquet England respects the right of all individuals to adopt a gender identity different than their sex assigned at birth. Except as set out below, all individuals may participate in all Croquet England activities. Unlawful discrimination, abuse or harassment, contrary to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy or the Codes of Conduct, will not be tolerated.

- For events advertised as open to any gender (or where the special conditions do not specify any gender restriction), participants of any gender identity may take part.
- For events advertised as restricted to Women¹ only, a participant's sex must have been assigned female at birth. This includes participants who have transitioned or are transitioning from female to male.
- For events advertised as restricted to Men² only, a participant's sex must have been assigned male at birth. This includes participants who have transitioned or are transitioning from male to female.
- For events advertised as Mixed, the team or partnership must consist of the published number of participants of each required sex. For instance, a Mixed Doubles team must include one player whose sex was assigned as female at birth and one whose sex was assigned as male at birth. A larger team would need to include the required number of each sex per the event criteria advertised.

¹ The term 'Women only' in this context should be broadly interpreted to include other words similarly used to define one sex, such as 'ladies' or 'female' or similar.

² Similarly, the term 'Men only' in this context should be broadly interpreted to include other words similarly used to define one sex, such as 'gentlemen' or 'male' or similar.

- Where Croquet England publishes awards that are restricted to one sex or the other, these shall be assessed and awarded to candidates based on their sex assigned at birth.

This policy operates within a framework that includes the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy, Anti-bullying policy, Welfare and Wellbeing policy, and Anti-Doping policy. Nothing in this policy permits, excuses, or justifies non-compliance with any of those requirements.

4. Investigations

Any individual wishing to raise any concern under this policy should do so with the principles of respect, discretion and confidentiality in mind, remembering that such matters are likely to be sensitive in nature. Concerns under this policy should therefore be discussed with Croquet England officials, but individuals are discouraged from sharing their concerns more widely or directly with the individual.

Croquet England is committed to providing an inclusive, respectful and welcoming environment for all who take part in Croquet England events, and consequently anyone with concerns should not attempt to raise those concerns directly with the individual. If any concern under this policy is identified during an event, the competitor should be permitted to continue and the matter investigated later.

If there are any circumstances which indicate non-compliance with this policy by an individual who is competing, is intending to compete or has competed within a relevant event, including a suspicion of non-compliance which is reasonably held in good faith, Croquet England has the right to investigate whether that individual is or was eligible under this policy to do so. Investigations will be conducted by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or someone appointed by them who has sufficient seniority and knowledge of the issue.

An individual who is subject to an investigation under this section is required to co-operate fully in good faith. Failure to do so may result in a decision to suspend the individual from competing in a relevant competition, pending a resolution and/or disciplinary proceedings being instigated.

In addition, Croquet England has a right to suspend an individual from competing in a relevant competition where further investigation is required before a conclusion can be reached.

Croquet England will use reasonable endeavours to complete any investigation as quickly as possible.

5. Disciplinary Proceedings

Where an investigation concludes that an individual has contravened this policy, either intentionally or negligently, the Executive may bring a complaint against the individual. The Croquet England Complaints Procedure sets out the process that will be followed in cases where a disciplinary process is deemed appropriate.

If the complaint is upheld, the outcome may include a ban on entering specific events or events of a specified nature. Where a competition has already been played, the outcome may include

disqualification of individual results and/or the forfeit of any prize, status or other award already won. For the avoidance of doubt, this does not apply to events that pre-dates the date of this policy.

6. Malicious or Bad-Faith Allegations

Where an allegation is raised in respect of an alleged breach of this policy, and there is reasonable suspicion or evidence to suggest that the allegation has been made either in bad faith, with malicious intent, or in breach of Croquet England's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy or Anti-Bullying policy, could give rise to a misconduct complaint which will be dealt with in accordance with Croquet England's Complaints Procedure.

7. Unforeseen Issues

Should an issue arise which is not foreseen within this policy, the Croquet England Executive may address the issue in a manner which it considers is reasonable, appropriate and in keeping with the general principles of this policy.

8. Appeals

There is a right of appeal against any action taken under section 5 of this policy, as detailed in the Complaints Procedure.

9. Definitions

The following terms have the following meanings in this policy:

- *Sex Assigned at Birth*: the designated sex, whether male or female, that is ascribed to an individual at birth as recorded on an individual's birth certificate at the time of birth, regardless of any subsequent changes to the birth certificate.
- *Gender identity*: This is a person's internal sense of their own gender, such as being a man, woman, both, neither, or another identity. It may or may not align with the sex assigned at birth.
- *Transgender*: an individual who adopts a different gender identification than their sex assigned at birth.
- *Transgender Man*: an individual assigned female at birth, who identifies as male.
- *Transgender Woman*: an individual assigned male at birth, who identifies as female.
- *Non-binary*: an umbrella term used to describe someone who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman.
- *DSD Conditions*: a term used to describe a broad group of rare conditions involving genes, hormones and reproductive organs, including the genitals. It means a person's sex development is different than expected.

10. References

- Complaints Procedure
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy

- Codes of Conduct
- Anti-bullying policy
- Welfare and Wellbeing policy
- Anti-Doping policy

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Reason for Change: Replacement of policy following Supreme Court Ruling

v1 of this policy was titled 'Policy for Transgender People Competing in Domestic Competition'